

Seeking Him

Isaiah 62:8-11; Luke 2:25-38

Did you see Jesus this week? No, I'm not talking about seeing a statue, in the nativity at home or here, at church.

Let me rephrase the question: Did you see evidence of Jesus or God's presence this week, actively involved in your everyday life? We've moved through the Season of Advent, waiting and preparing for the Coming of Christ. Emmanuel, God with us, has been our focus. Have you seen evidence of God with us, in our midst? The Holy Scriptures tell us that God is ever present, always in our midst. We are also told that God dwells in us by His Holy Spirit and that he never leaves or forsakes us. So, if you did not notice God's presence, why? Were you focused on yourself or so absorbed in your own world that you completely missed him? Perhaps you, like so many others, missed seeing God because you were not looking for him, even here, in this place sometimes we miss God's presence because we are not open to seeing him.

In the passage read from the Gospel according to Luke, we meet two people who see the newborn Jesus because they had sought him all their lives. Simeon and Anna, two senior saints, got to see Jesus face-to-face and know beyond a doubt that He was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, the Promised One.

Too often as Christians grow older they think they are through serving God, because they feel they cannot do what they see once able to do. However, Simeon and Anna are great examples to all of us. We see these two, older disciples who realize that God is not finished with them until their last breath is drawn. Simeon and Anna teach us that ministry is not about US. Ministry, and what God calls us to do, has nothing to do with age. Ministry is not about what WE - you and I - can do. Ministry is about what God can do through us. Even though we only read about Simeon and Anna in this one passage of Luke and they are not mentioned by the other Gospel writers, there is much we can learn from them in this brief meeting. First, God had a special purpose for these senior saints. Both of them were older and the highest moment of their lives and their greatest ministry opportunity came to them in the latter days of their lives.

“Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel” and Anna, who was a prophetess (one who declared the future promises of God), in v.38 told *“all who were looking forward to the redemption of Israel”* that their hope had come into the world. Simeon and Anna kept their hope in Jesus and the writer of The Gospel according to Luke emphasized that about them.

Simeon and Anna managed to see through all the smoke of the Roman government and focused their lives on Jesus, their only hope. The Messiah was coming. They knew that with certainty, because the Torah had said so, the prophets had foretold it. And they were waiting for Him.

We are told that Simeon was “righteous”, indicating that he did what was right according to the Law and “devout”, meaning that he feared God. He did what was right because He had a healthy respect for God. Simeon was waiting to see the promised Messiah, knowing that his life would soon end, but living to see the promise fulfilled.

We've been waiting for the Promised One as well. Waiting for the return. Waiting for Christ to come again. Waiting for his promise to be fulfilled. Waiting.... But Simeon was also seeking. Simeon was looking for, seeking to see the Anointed One, seeking to see Jesus. Simeon believed and was living his life in expectancy of the promise being fulfilled. Are you?

And, Anna? Anna was found at the temple ‘night and day’. She was there every day ministering to others. Simeon and Anna are great examples of how seniors minister to others without realizing it – they were where the people of God were, regularly. It’s called the ministry of presence. It’s the most basic way all of us minister – by just showing up. When we show up, people are glad to see us. When you walked in those doors today you ministered just by being here. Anytime we show up - at Bible study, for covered-dish lunches, at the PW meeting or for Sunday school, it encourages other people. Seniors especially. Why? Because the older you get, the harder it is to get out. And when we get together that’s when we have the best opportunities to serve each other.

Heb. 10:24-25:

Let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves.

Anna was working to support others as she too sought the Promised One, as she looked with anticipation for the Savior, as she anticipated the coming of Christ. Are you?

Songs, good feelings, beautiful liturgy, nice presents, big dinners, and sweet words do not make Christmas. Christmas is saying yes to something beyond all emotions and feelings. Christmas is looking for and EXPECTING Jesus to show up. Christmas is believing that we have been made a promise and that promise will be fulfilled. Christmas is seeking the Christ in the world. Christmas is seeking to be Christ in the world.

Have you seen Jesus lately? Amen.